

A watercolor illustration of a busy street scene. The street is lined with multi-story buildings in various colors like red, yellow, and blue. A tall, thin church spire rises in the background. People are walking on the sidewalks, and there are signs on the buildings, including "25 FREAK'S PEASEED WAREHOUSE" and "HOM WIL GOD SHI FOR". The overall style is soft and painterly.

PERSPECTIVE

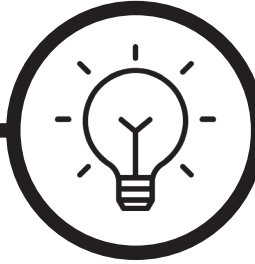
DECEMBER 2024

WORK, LEISURE, & THE PURITANS

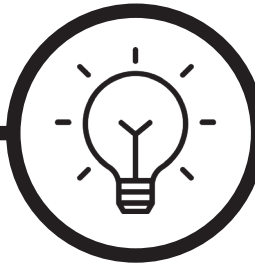
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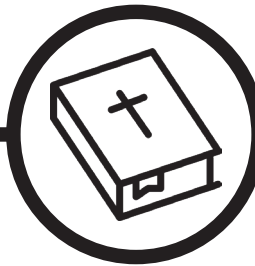
ARTICLE 1
Work, Leisure, & Puritans
Jacob Salley



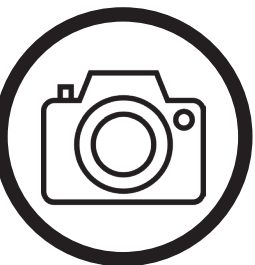
BOOK HIGHLIGHT 6
*You're Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect
God's Design and Why That's Good News*
Written by Kelly M. Kopic
Recommended by Hope Arbery



BOOK HIGHLIGHT 7
Step by Step
Written by James Petty
Recommended by Alex Basurto



BIBLE READING PLAN 8
Take Up & Read
December



NEW MEMBERS 9
*Stephanie Broadbent, Hannah Dakanay,
Taze & Shaelin Lamb, Will Niederhauser,
Aaron Vick, Dalton & Caroline Williams*

Work, Leisure, and the Puritans

A CONUNDRUM

When the English Baptist theologian John Ryland (1753–1825) prepared to write his posthumous biography of contemporary friend and fellow-minister extraordinaire Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), he included a snippet of a letter from Fuller’s widow, Ann Coles (1763–1825), about their home life. She recollected her late husband’s tendencies:

. . . so great a degree was he absorbed in his work, as scarcely to allow himself any leisure, or relaxation from the severest application; [. . .] I was sometimes [sic.] used to remark, how much we were occupied; (for, indeed, I had no small share of care devolved upon me, in consequence;) his reply usually was, ‘Ah, my dear, the way for us to have any joy, is to rejoice in all our labour, and then we shall have plenty of joy.’ If I complained, that he allowed himself no time for recreation, he would answer, ‘O no: all my recreation is a change of work.’ If I expressed an apprehension that he would soon wear himself out, he would reply, ‘I cannot be worn out in a better cause. We must work while it is day;’ or, ‘Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.’ There was a degree of bluntness in his manner; which yet did not arise from an unsociable or churlish disposition, but from an impatience of interruption in the grand object of his pursuit. In this sense, he seemed not to know his relations or nearest friends.¹

Fuller’s indefatigable work ethic and sheer industriousness were an immense blessing in one sense. After all, without these traits and abilities, Mount Vernon Baptist Church—along with thousands of other Baptist congregations worldwide—may never have existed as they do today. Around 250 years ago, in the late eighteenth century, a good portion of the British Calvinistic (or “Particular”) Baptist churches—our direct theological forefathers as English-speaking, Reformed, Baptist Christians today—had capitulated to the serious and dangerous error of Hyper-Calvinism, and they were spiritually withering because of it. Primarily (though not exclusively), it was Fuller’s unexpected book *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (1786), coupled with his subsequently rich and fruitful decades-long ministry to dozens of young Baptist pastors across England, that God providentially provided as the vital course-correction needed to revitalize these

congregations back to a more biblical and evangelical theology of salvation. It would be difficult to overstate his influence and impact. Andrew Fuller was one of the most consequential Baptists in all of history, and he gave the near total sum of his life to ministry and to writing in order to aide Christ’s own bride—local congregations he loved—from spiritual desolation.

And yet, in another sense, we also see in this excerpt a picture of a finite man struggling to balance a plethora of weighty responsibilities well all at once. Later in the letter, Ann Coles Fuller assured Ryland of her warmth towards her late husband and her understanding of his unique calling and situation, but the tenor of her description of Fuller clearly showed a genuine concern for the busyness with which he lived his life. So engrossed with his labors for the church, time spent on leisure, recreation, or even simple non-structured moments set apart for his family and friends was seldom. Amidst his eye-popping service offered to others—writing, speaking, preaching, traveling, and ministering to so many—we see he was little involved with domestic affairs, even if his wife was overworked. And, though we know Fuller was a magnanimous friend to many throughout his life, here we discover that his wife believed his mind to be so intensely and unbrokenly stayed upon “the grand object of his pursuit”—ministry to the church at Kettering in love for Jesus Christ—sometimes affected the important relationships in his life. Fuller’s many accomplishments and feats were crucial to his time and place, but they came at a personal cost. It is no wonder that Fuller suffered from severe headaches and regular bouts of illnesses in the final fifteen years of his life, given the scarce time he devoted to his own physical or mental rejuvenation.

I suspect that all of us see something of ourselves in the conundrum of Andrew Fuller’s life as it relates to work and leisure. Perhaps you struggle to find the proper balance of each in your own life. I believe this side of heaven, we all will! Historically speaking, what can Christians today learn from a man like Fuller, who did so much unquestionable good for the church, yet simultaneously imperfectly lived out God’s design for work and leisure in his own context? And where, exactly, did Andrew Fuller’s vision for work and leisure come from? What historical tradition, heritage, or influences informed the habits that shaped his own life’s “work-and-leisure” patterns? Where can we be better equipped from having studied his mistakes?

A respected historian once quipped in jest to me, “Straightforward, black-and-white interpretations of

¹John Ryland, *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope, Illustrated; in the Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (London: Button and Son, 1816), 475–6.

historical events and time periods are the kinds that sell the most paperbacks in the book shops, make the *New York Times* bestseller lists, and get on the Amazon.com history books page. Then there's the rest of us historians, who sheepishly retort: 'Well...it's a bit more complicated than that.' Sadly, for us, the latter kind don't sell as many books." The moral of this clever comment is that more often than not, despite our desire for the past to be simplified and distilled into a grand, solitary, all-encompassing, tour-de-force-level thesis, history's events and history's characters—men and women, fallen, yet made in the image of God—are more complicated than first glances typically indicate. We ought to always be suspicious of scrutinizing any historical development or individual character's beliefs under the lens of a singular, totalizing explanatory theory. However, in the case of Andrew Fuller and the Particular Baptists more broadly, we can rightly deduce that at least one of the major theological and intellectual influences upon their "work-and-leisure" patterns originated from *their own* forefathers in the faith: the English Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, the relationship between Puritanism and patterns of work and economy in capitalist societies has been one of the liveliest debates amongst historians of religion in the past hundred years.² If we are to learn anything from the evangelical "work-and-leisure" culture of Andrew Fuller and our other eighteenth-century forebearers, we must go back a handful of generations before his time and take a closer look at the Puritans, who greatly directed the future of Protestant attitudes towards work and leisure across the Western world. It is to their history we now turn.

WHAT IS PURITANISM?

The word "Puritan," as is the case with many pejorative terms used throughout political history, has a murky origin story and is frequently hazily defined. The label Puritan sprung up *en masse* in the early- to mid-seventeenth century in England, and was used by contemporaries to describe—or, perhaps better put, *malign*—particularly "radical" Christians in English society. These individuals were sometimes referred to as "the hotter sort of Protestants" or "the godly" by their observers. The creation of the state-sponsored Church of England in 1558 as a middle way between Roman Catholicism and Reformed Protestantism—a "hybrid" church intended to put an end to the political violence of

the 1550s, and which made the British crown the head and chief of authority of the Church—frustrated these "hotter" Protestants in the decades that would follow. Pastors, theologians, and laypeople of this ilk, because of their passionate belief in the word of God and the theology of the Reformation, felt vehemently that the Anglican Church did not go far enough to purge false doctrine and idolatry from within its walls. Their desire was to purify both the Church itself and English society more broadly to better align with biblical standards of worship and praxis. These sincere Protestants' intense dedication to the purification of their fellow Englishmen (often to their neighbors' great dismay and annoyance!) and the institution of the Church of England into a more "fully Reformed" Protestant church were the key hallmarks that earned them the name "Puritan." Between the 1620s–40s, many embraced the label with pride despite its original intention as a smear, and Puritanism, as a historical phenomenon, became more clearly defined and visible within the political and social life of England by the mid-century.

As one might imagine, the Puritans didn't just bring their zeal for Christ and his church to Sunday mornings alone; they brought that same level of joyous, worshipful intensity unto the Lord into their workplaces and their daily lives.³ Their attitudes and actions surrounding work and leisure are traceable directly back to Lutheran and Calvinist theology from the Protestant Reformation, which, as Allister McGrath has noted, believed "all human work, however lowly, was capable of glorifying God."⁴ Like the Reformers, the Puritans believed that "work was, quite simply, an act of praise—a potentially productive act of praise."⁵ Before the Reformation in the sixteenth century, during the medieval period, it was a solitary Monasticism—not ordinary or secular labor in the wider world—that was believed to be the superior form of spiritual maturity and obedience to God. This view dominated for centuries under Roman Catholicism on the European continent and within the British Isles.⁶ Therefore, when the Protestant Reformation took the world by storm and "gave a vital new motivation for committing oneself to the everyday world"—since the whole creation was now but a stage of glory and wonder on which her Creator is to be admired—"ordinary" work was transformed into *supernatural work* to Christians such as the Puritans.

² Although a dozen or more references could go here, mainly cf. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, transl. Talcott Parsons (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930), and R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (London: John Murray, 1926), which are the seminal texts.

³ See, for example, John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603–1689* (London: Macmillan, 1998) 36–41, 72–78.

⁴ Allister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 224.

⁵ McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 224.

⁶ McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 220–1.

THE ENGLISH PURITANS AT WORK

If I was only allowed one word to describe the English Puritans and their work, I believe it would be the word *industrious*. The Puritans, as they say, didn't "mess around" when it came to working—and, at that, working *hard*. As Leland Ryken has elucidated in his helpful book *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective*, they believed work to be a creation ordinance, given to man before the Fall, and therefore a dignified, God-given gift—a gift which was to be given much diligence and effort in its performance.⁷ For this same reason, inasmuch as the Puritans inherently valued and honored industrious work, they in equal measure strongly disdained idleness, sloth, or laziness.⁸ Taking their cue from the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, the Puritans would often quote this passage amongst their own churches and communities that "if anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat." As already mentioned, in lockstep with the Protestant reformers, English Puritans saw no distinction between so-called "sacred" versus "secular" work; as William Perkins (1558–1602) put it, "The action of a shepherd in keeping sheep . . . is as good a work before God as is the action of a judge in giving a sentence, or a magistrate in ruling, or a minister in preaching."⁹ Thus, for the Puritans, *all* work—from the mother at home with her children, to the pastor in the pulpit, to the merchant in the marketplace—belonged to, and was a worshipful act unto, God. It is worth quoting one of Martin Luther's vivid illustrations that so powerfully communicates this point, in ways often only he could:

. . . when a father goes ahead and washes diapers or performs some other mean [i.e., humble] task for his child, and someone ridicules him as an effeminate fool . . . God, with all his angels and creatures, is smiling, not because that father is washing diapers, but because he is doing so in Christian faith.¹⁰

Furthermore, the Puritans collectively believed strongly in the concept of God's "calling"—or, alternatively, "vocation"—in each individual Christian's life. This concept was not to be understood merely as God's directing someone into a precise field of labor or

profession (though this was a part of it); instead, it was a totalizing vision of God's sovereign, providential ordering of the whole sum of a person's life. From the home, to the raising of children, to the local church, to the workplace, and every nook and cranny between, God was in control, affirmed the Puritans.¹¹ This conviction in God's sovereignty over each individual's station and circumstance in life (1 Corinthians 7:20) resulted in the necessity of both *stewardship* in one's daily life and vocational responsibilities, as well as *contentment* in whatever work God so ordered for one's life to partake.¹² For the Puritans, to labor assiduously in any facet of life—in faith—was to work as unto the Lord rather than men (Colossians 3:23–24).

The Puritans also warned of the dangers of overwork. Both the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself and excessive work for its own sake were considered expressions of sinful worldliness.¹³ If a man's heart was daily set upon the things of the world—such as comfort, possessions, land, property—as preeminent, rather than the "things above" (Colossians 3:1–2), this was an expression of his lack of trust in God's provision for him (Matthew 6:25–34). Virtually all of the Puritans were strict Sabbatarians, and in a time and society when many would have, by choice or by force, worked seven days per week, the sacredness of Sundays as completely off-limits for labor was a tangible protection of the hearts and inward desires of Christians (and the wider English population) to reorient themselves towards spiritual realities.¹⁴

THE ENGLISH PURITANS AT REST

As we have seen, the Puritans had a well-formed theological framework of Christian work and labor, and they put it into practice with gusto. Without doubt, being attached to the very label of "Puritan" in early modern English culture would have carried with it a certain notion about the industriousness and voluminous output of which one was capable. More soberly, it is all too common to read of the untimely deaths of pastors in their own funeral sermons and eulogies during this historical

⁷ Leland Ryken, *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 93. The following section of this essay will rely heavily on Ryken's *Work and Leisure*, as it is one of the best modern, readable treatments of Puritans on work and leisure.

⁸ Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 94.

⁹ William Perkins, "A Treatise of the Vocations, or Callings of Men" in *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (London: John Legatt, 1626), 758, as quoted in Ryken, 95.

¹⁰ Martin Luther, "The Estate of Marriage" in *Luther's Works*, vol. 45, ed. Walther I. Brandt (1522; repr., Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1962), pt. III.

¹¹ Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 96–97.

¹² Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 97.

¹³ Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 99–100.

¹⁴ Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 99–100.

period caused, in part, by their unrelenting and demanding ministry schedules.¹⁵

Where the Puritans have fared less kindly in modern historical discussions and assessments, however, is in their attitudes toward rest and leisure. Some critiques of the Puritans' theology and practice of rest are, however, either unfounded or misinformed, and these caricatures ought to be dismissed upon greater investigation. Ryken summarizes a few of these succinctly: no, the Puritans were *not* against fun or merriment; no, the Puritans were *not* against sports, recreational activities, or earthly refreshment, though they did indeed limit many *kinds* or *categories* of leisure possibilities upon moral or theological grounds. No, the Puritans did *not* abolish national holidays or intervals of wider societal rest capriciously, though they did seek to be rid of the Roman Catholic holy calendar, again for clear theological reasons. No, the Puritans were *not* against the creative arts or beautiful culture creation, *per se*; however, their deep anti-Catholic iconoclasm certainly prevented their acceptance of certain kinds of art or culture. And, finally, no—the Puritans did *not* only wear drab, dreary, and gloomy black and grey clothing all the time!¹⁶

One of the most significant positive features Puritanism contributed to long-term Protestant views on leisure was their emphasis on the spiritual activities of the Lord's Day (for them, Sabbath) as a special and uniquely wonderful kind of relaxation for the Christian.¹⁷ For the Puritan shopkeeper, tinker, mother, carpenter, farmer, or child, worshipping in communion with the saints on the Lord's Day was the absolute, undisputed experiential mountain-peak of the week. Given that the five-day workweek was not known to the Western world until the early twentieth century, for many in the poorer and middling classes, Sunday was their sole day away from labor each week—and it was not to be squandered on the world! Most Puritans would spend nearly every waking moment on Sundays traveling to get to church, participating in corporate worship, praying together afterwards, eating meals together, and giving thanks to God together—frequently into the evening hours. The right worship of the risen Christ alongside his saints was the most joyous and God-glorifying form of Christian leisure the Puritans could imagine, and their love and fervor for the church was unmatched in their day.

Yet, as it regarded other forms of play, leisure, or rest outside of worship, the Puritans were far more suspicious, and, sadly, Pharisaical at times. This suspicion stemmed from both the seriousness with which they took God's commandments from his word, as well as from a fear of sinning against God through immoral or foolhardy leisure choices. Because gambling, drunkenness, cockfighting, violent sports, and similar pastimes were commonplace within English society, Puritans would often place highly specific and extrabiblical parameters for themselves—and for the country as a whole, when in political power—around various kinds of play and leisure, to ensure as best as possible that no sin was being unwittingly committed. Ryken, for example, comments that Richard Baxter (1615–1691) had no less than *eighteen* (!) qualifying considerations that should govern a Christian's leisure choices.¹⁸ Additionally, some Puritan communities instated mandatory reporting laws in their towns, for neighbors to report on each other to the authorities about any loud singing, dancing, or otherwise frolicsome behavior that could lead to a sinful raucous. Ryken summarizes the situation well when he says, “The general tenor of [these] Puritan pronouncements is a quickness to think the worst of leisure and to ban an activity that carried either the appearance or potential for abuse.”¹⁹ Any leisure beyond Christian worship, for many Puritans, was a chiefly utilitarian thing of life that was merely a help to encourage people to get back to work more diligently. In their conception, leisure was subservient to work, and they made no bones about it—neither in their theological musings, nor in their political power-wielding, nor in their lives.

OUR MODERN-DAY CONUNDRUM

Fast-forwarding back ahead a hundred years or so, we can now see with greater clarity where Andrew Fuller may have been somewhat mistaken in his own practice of biblical work-and-leisure patterns. He inherited, socially, an English Protestant tradition—and, intellectually, a cadre of theological predecessors' body of written thought—who sometimes overemphasized the wonderful good of work and labor at the expense of play, leisure, and rest. Most likely, Fuller never would have seriously considered any other way of living his life, since the ubiquity of culturalized Puritan work-and-leisure patterns within eighteenth-century evangelical Protestant ministry were the given plausibility structures of his age. In other words,

¹⁵ Such as David Brainerd (1718–1747), Henry Scougal (1650–1678), Thomas Boston (1676–1732), Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), Caleb Evans (1737–1791), or Samuel Pearce (1766–1799)—just to name a select few who come to mind during the early modern period.

¹⁶ Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 100–105.

¹⁷ See, for example, Nicholas Bownd, *The True Doctrine of the Sabbath* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1606).

¹⁸ Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 108–9.

¹⁹ Ryken, *Work and Leisure*, 109.

working at the expense of rest was the very air that those of his historical period and belief breathed.

How do we, today, avoid the same kind of misstep in our own lives? I believe the best and most useful historical analysis is usually done with a healthy amount of personal humility and empathy. Hindsight is, after all, always 20-20, and every person, culture, nation, and time period will have its blind spots. So, having now made every effort to understand *why* Fuller and the Puritans thought the way they did, I suggest the following. First, rather than passing any undue judgment upon the Puritans, Andrew Fuller, or anyone else, it would serve us well to remember that we, like all Christians of history, ought to always return to the Scriptures (like the Reformers!) first and foremost as the litmus test for our doctrine and practice of faith—not ultimately to our culture, our inherited ways or habits, or even our forebearers. Second, recognize that one of God’s graces to you, in preserving some of the written history about his church, is allowing you to grow in holiness through both *emulation* of right doctrine and practice from history and tradition and, also, by *pre-emptively circumventing* wrongs, sins, or blind spots other Christians suffered from in their own days. Finally, we would do well to question and probe our own modern, American culture’s work-and-leisure assumptions, and seek to more biblically balance our own lives’ work and leisure tendencies in light of the example of our Particular Baptist and Puritan forebearers. I am certain if we did so, the conclusions we would draw would be both surprising and enriching.

— Jacob Salley

You're Only Human

*How Your Limits Reflect God's Design
and Why That's Good News*

Written by Kelly M. Kapic

In his recent book, Kelly Kapic argues that many Americans fail to recognize our limitations as a good gift from God. God created us as finite beings – limited in space, time, power, and knowledge. When we forget this, we begin to act as though we can do it all and that we have no limitations. Based on Scriptural wisdom, Kapic demonstrates that we should embrace our finitude, which drives us together and toward a healthy interdependence on each other and our God.

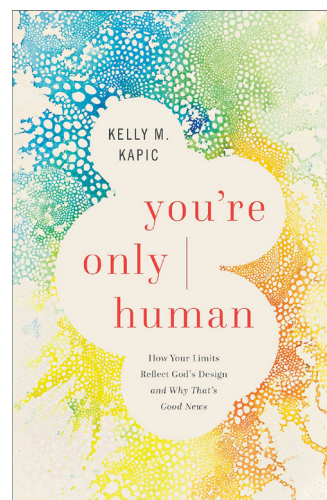
Do we all struggle with our finitude? I think so! We can see this struggle affecting how we approach our daily lives. Do we acknowledge our limitations, or do we pack our kids' schedules from early morning to late night? Do we stress over not doing enough at work? Do we keep trying to take on one more activity? Are we afraid to say no to just one more thing? Do we deny we are getting old and think we will always be young? Do we feel guilty that we aren't doing enough for the poor, needy, missionaries, widows, the lost, or other saints?

Since the fall, human beings have been tempted to resist the good and loving boundaries set by God. We all wrestle with the discomfort of divine restrictions and live in a disordered relationship to our limits. We don't accept our finitude and see it as a gift because our theology is often weak and underdeveloped. We start to think we know what is best and seek to control everything.

Kapic challenges us to look at ourselves differently from the world. Rather than measure ourselves by worldly standards, he encourages us to study God's Word to gain a proper understanding of who we are in relation to a good and loving God.

This book would benefit anyone, regardless of age, vocation, or stage in life. We all struggle with our limitations. *You're Only Human* helps us rest in knowing who we are in relation to God the Creator and how gracious He has been to bring us into the church, which is his body. May we all grow in communion with God and each other as we embrace our finitude as a gift from Him.

— Recommended by Hope Arbery



Excerpts from the Book

1

Within a Christian view of the world, humility consists of recognizing that our limitations do not threaten us but liberate us both to worship God and to cherish others. It gratefully participates in communal life, exalting the needs of others over one's own while still honoring one's own finitude.

– "Have We Misunderstood Humility?" p. 97

2

Life in his kingdom depends on God's grace toward us, which liberates us from concern only for ourselves into service for others, opening us to patience, love, and concern for the whole world.

– "Do I Need to Be Part of the Church?" p. 176

3

How might our lives be changed if we just chewed on simple promises like "The Lord is near" as a cow chews on her cud?

– "How Do We Faithfully Live Within Our Finitude?" p. 209

Step by Step

Divine Guidance for Ordinary Christians

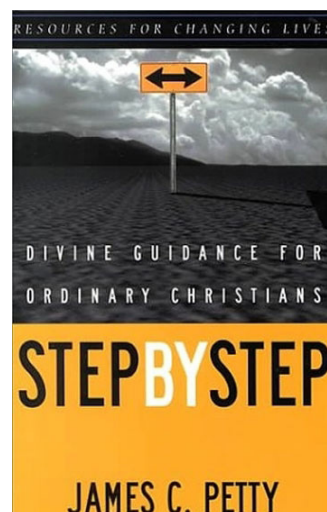
Written by James Petty

James Petty's *Step by Step* is a thoughtful and practical guide that examines the process of spiritual growth and discipleship in the Christian life. The book focuses on how believers can pursue a closer walk with God by committing to small, intentional steps each day. Petty presents a clear thesis: **Spiritual transformation happens not through dramatic, one-time events but through consistent, daily choices that align with God's will.** Drawing on biblical wisdom and personal experience, Petty emphasizes the importance of perseverance, the gradual nature of spiritual growth, and the necessity of trusting God in every step of the journey.

One of the key takeaways from *Step by Step* is the reminder that spiritual maturity is a lifelong process requiring discipline and attention to detail in everyday life. Petty's relatable anecdotes and real-world applications make the book accessible and practical for readers from all walks of life. I particularly appreciated the emphasis on the importance of habits and routines—how seemingly small actions can lead to profound, lasting change in our relationship with God. The book also challenges readers to reflect on their priorities and take an honest look at their spiritual practices, encouraging a deeper, more intentional walk with Christ.

This book is an excellent resource for anyone looking to deepen their faith and live more intentionally according to God's purpose. Whether you're a new believer seeking guidance or someone who has been walking with Christ for years but feels stagnant, *Step by Step* provides valuable insights for everyone. Pastors, small group leaders, and those involved in discipleship relationships will also find this book to be a helpful tool in guiding others in their spiritual journeys. Petty's accessible writing style, combined with his deep understanding of Scripture, makes this a book that can be easily read, discussed, and applied in personal and group settings alike.

— Recommended by Alex Basurto



Excerpts from
the Book

1

[D]ivine guidance has nothing to do with this discerning [a] secret plan and using it to make decisions. Guidance is given by God when he gives us insight into issues and choices so that we make the decisions with divinely inspired wisdom. *Guidance comes, in short, by God making us wise.*

– "How Does God Guide Us: Three Views" p. 33

2

God's sovereign providence is like that guardrail to our decision-making. We are hurtling down the mountain of life with turns and switchbacks constantly confronting us. Yet, we can have confidence that God has established the boundaries of our lives. He holds us carefully in his hand despite the dangers we face and the foolish decisions we make.

– "Guidance and the Plan of God" p. 77

3

From a biblical perspective, wisdom is more miraculous and supernatural than any prophecy or directly inspired revelation. In this marvelous work, God progressively transforms sinners to think like himself, with God's priorities, sensitivities, agenda, and love.

– "Guidance and the Wisdom of God" p. 149

DECEMBER

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!

December 1	Revelation 21:22–27	December 17	Matthew 1:18–2:12
December 2	Romans 15:1–6	December 18	John 1:1–18
December 3	1 Corinthians 1:1–17	December 19	Luke 1:1–25
December 4	1 Corinthians 1:18–31	December 20	Luke 1:26–38
December 5	1 Corinthians 2	December 21	Luke 2:1–38
December 6	Psalms 69	December 22	Luke 1:26–38
December 7	1 Corinthians 3	December 23	Psalms 116
December 8	Romans 15:1–6	December 24	Psalms 112
December 9	Romans 15:7–13	December 25	Psalms 113
December 10	2 Samuel 22	December 26	Psalms 114
December 11	Psalms 18	December 27	Matthew 6:5–15
December 12	Deuteronomy 32	December 28	Psalms 115
December 13	Isaiah 11:1–10	December 29	Psalms 116
December 14	Psalms 117	December 30	Exodus 3:13–22
December 15	Romans 15:7–13	December 31	Exodus 2:1–10
December 16	Luke 1:26–38		

TAKE UP & READ

NEW MEMBERS



**Stephanie
Broadbent**



**Hannah
Dakanay**



**Taze &
Shaelin Lamb**



**Will
Niederhauser**



Aaron Vick



**Caroline &
Dalton
Williams**



MOUNT VERNON

BAPTIST CHURCH